CORRELATIVE LEXICOLOGY OF TAMIL AND HINDI: A PROPOSAL

S. RAJENDRAN

Contrastive study of two languages is useful from the point of view of language learning and language teaching. Contrastive grammer of Tamil (T) and Hindi (H) has been attempted by some scholars. There are remarkable differences between the grammatical systems of T and H. The lexical items of the two languages also differ much from each other. The difficulty of learning a language lies not only in acquiring the grammar of the language but also in acquiring the vocabulary of the language. The purpose of this paper is to form a theoretical frame-work by taking into account a sample of vocabulary itmes to correlate the lexicology of T and H. This study will be helpful in preparing a useful bilingual dictionary of T and H. It can be argued that a correlative lexicological study should precede a bilingual dictionary work.

The contrast can be made by arranging the lexical items of source language in alphabetical order and giving the translational and explanatory equivalents in the target language as in a conventional bilingual dictionary. But fruitful correlation can be made by first grouping the lexical items of the two languages into certain semantic domains and then comparing the constituent lexical items which fall in these semantic domains. In this way the correlation can be shown more effectively. In line with Nida (1975), lexical items can be broadly grouped under four semantic domains: (1) entities or objects (e.g. T: *maram,* H: *peṛ* 'tree'; T: *vi:Tu,* H: *ghar* 'house'; T: *ka:RRu,* H: *hava:* 'air', etc.), (2) events (both actions and process) (e.g. T: *va:,* H: *a:na:* 'come'; T: *po:,* H: *ja:na:* 'go'; etc.), (3) abstracts (e.g. T: *nalla,* H: accha:/acchi: 'good'; T: *keTTa, H:bura:/buri:* 'bad') and (4) relationals (e.g. T: *uLLe:,* H: *andar* 'inside', *arukil* 'near', etc.). The entities can be further divided into inanimate and animate entities. Inanimate entities can be further divided into natural and manufactured or constructed entities. Animate entities can be further grouped into animals, birds, insects,human beings, and supernatural powers, or beings. Events can be grouped into physical, physiological, sensory, emotive, intellectual, communication, association, control, movement, impact, transfer, etc. Abstracts can be subdivided into time, distance, volume, velocity, temperature, colour, number, status, good-bad, etc. Relationals can be subgrouped into spatial, temporal, deictic, logical, etc. Likewise further subgroupings can be made and finally we will get a number of smaller semantic domains in both the languages. Now we can take the members of the similar semantic domains and start contrasting them.

Many items which fall in the group 'entities' have one to one correspondence in T and H. Such items have only one meaning indicating the referent. For example *maram* 'tree' in T can be shown as the exact equivalent of *peṛ* 'tree' in H. The difficulty is with polysemous lexical items; they generally show partial similarity and so they have partial equivalents. The following observations can be made:

(1) A lexical item in T can be absolutely equivalent to a lexical item in H and vice versa. For example, *pal* 'tooth' and *maram* 'tree' in T are equivalent to *dã:t 'tooth'* and *peṛ* respectively in H. This situation of absolute

similarity can be shown as follows :

T: pal 'tooth' = H: dã:t

T: maram 'tree' = H: peṛ

(2) A lexical item in T can have partial similarity with a lexical item in H. That is, they overlap in meaning in certain contexts and differ from each other in other contexts. For example, the lexical item *o:Tu,* 'run' in T has partial similarity with the lexical item *dOṛna:* 'run' in H. Both *o:Tu* and *dOṛna:* are used with the meaning 'run as animals'. *o:Tu* in Tamil is used also with the meaning 'run as a liquid in a channel, river, tube, etc.; work as a machine; run as a vehicle; ply; etc, This situation of partial similarity can be shown as follows :

1. T: o:Tu 'run' as animals' = H: dOṛna:
2. T: o:Tu ≠ H: dOṛna:
   a. run as a liquid in a channel, river, tube, etc.
      = H: bahna:
   b. work as a machine = H: chalna:
   c. run as a vehicle = H: ja:na:
   d. ply = chalna:

(3) A lexical item in T can have a wider semantic area than the corresponding lexical item in H and vice versa. For example, *viri* in T and *khilna:* in H are used with the meaning 'blossom as a flower'; but *viri* is used also with the meaning 'spread as a cloth; expand; as a baloon, etc., unfold as an umbrella, etc.'

1. T: viri 'blossom as a flower' = H: khiln
2. T: viri ≠ H: khilna:
   a. spread as cloth = H: phElna:
   b. expand as baloon, etc. = H: phu:lna:
   c. unfold as an umbrella = H: kholna:

(4) A lexical item in T can have a number of translational equivalents in H and vice versa. For example *ke:L* 'ask; hear' in T has at least two translational equivalents, *pu:chna:* 'ask' and *sunna:* 'hear' in H. This situation can be represented as follows :

1. T: ke:L 'ask' = H: pu:chna:
2. T: ke:L 'hear' = H: sunna:

(5) Certain socio-cultural items in T may not have translatioal equivalents in H and vice versa. For example *curuL* which denotes 'pan-money offered to bridegroom in the wedding night' in T does not have translational equivalent in H.

(6) Certain lexical items which are simple in T may have equivalents which may be paraphrases or compounds in H and vice versa. For example *naTi* 'act' in T is equivalent to *na:Tak karna:* 'act' which is a compound.

The following is a sample analysis :

I. Entities : Body parts :
   1.T: talai 'head' = H: sir
   2.T: kaN 'eye' = H: ã:kh
II. Events: Movement :
   1.T: po: 'go' = H: ja:na:
III. Abstracts: Time:
   1.T: ne:ram 'time' = H: samay
   2.T: inRu: 'today' = H: a:j
IV. Relationals: Spatial:
   1.T: ki:le: 'below' = H: ni:cce:
   2.T: uLLe: 'inside' = H: andar

It is needless to say that this is only an outline. Improvement should be made to suit thr frame work for an effective analysis.

Reference

Nida, E. A. 1975. Componential analysis of meaning: An Introduction to semantic structure. The Hegue: Mouton.